

Eva'Joyce Spivey
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Dear Distinguished Members of the Appropriations Committee,

My name is Eva'Joyce Spivey, I am a Graduate student in my final semester pursuing my Master of Science in Sociology at Southern Connecticut State University, I also obtained my bachelor's in political science from Southern. I come before you today to share my personal experience and stress the importance of funding for our colleges.

I want to begin by stating I am a first-generation college student, from a black single parent household. I did not have access to the same level of financial resources as others around me. My mother always stressed the importance of me going to college, working hard and paving a way for myself. But, neither of us realized the cost or the financial burden that comes after you get admitted into college. So, in August 2014 just two weeks before move-in day, despite having several acceptance letters in hand I couldn't afford to go anywhere. We applied for loans, (that we didn't qualify for) searched for scholarships and none of it was enough. I decided to reach out to my financial aid counselor at Southern and she told me she'd give me a call back. Within in an hour she reached back out to me and let me know I was being awarded a scholarship funded through the state. I began school a week later and my life changed.

At Southern, I grew into a leader. Funding allowed me to work on campus in the Office of Student Involvement and Leadership Development. I joined a community conscious action-oriented organization, Zeta Phi Beta Sorority, Inc and become engulfed in all Southern's social justice initiatives. This office and many others at our colleges provide resources for all students to develop themselves beyond college and go out into the world like myself. At Southern is where I found my passion for diversity equity and inclusion in higher education. Deciding to pursue my Masters in Sociology at a social justice driven university was an easy decision, but my decision became clearer because knew I would have access to these financial resources.

Without the continued support and funding from this distinguished committee thousands of students will not be able to cultivate their identities and become leaders in the community. Without the funding and support from this distinguished committee, I would not have been able to attend college, let alone be completing a second degree in two months. The bottom lines are, without the funding and support from this distinguished committee I would not have been able to stand before you today.

Aiding in the continued growth and development of the generations to come is at the heart of everything I do, I cannot do that alone. I trust that they will be able to rely on your continued support and funding. I want to thank the distinguished members of this committee for the opportunity to address you all today and my campus community at Southern for allowing me this opportunity.